

Keating Becomes NORAD and USNORTHCOM Commander

Press Release

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PETERSON AFB, Colo. ? It was before a full house that Navy Adm. Timothy J. Keating assumed command of North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command from Air Force Gen. Ed Eberhart in ceremonies here today.

The former director of the Joint Staff is the first non-Air Force officer to command NORAD since its creation in 1958. Eberhart had been commander of USNORTHCOM since its creation following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Eberhart will retire during a separate ceremony later this year. His active-duty military career spans 36 years.



Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, USAF, presenting the U.S. Northern command flag to Admiral Keating during the Change of Command ceremony held at Peterson AFB, Colo. November 5, 2004

Paul Wolfowitz, deputy Secretary of Defense, called Eberhart a ?trailblazer? who had led in war and peace with ?imagination, independence and strong influence.? These are the same attributes Eberhart exhibited as a forward air controller flying 300 bombing missions in South Vietnam, Wolfowitz said. They are also the attributes that persuaded President Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to appoint Eberhart as commander of USNORTHCOM.

Wolfowitz went on to praise Eberhart for bringing together the four military branches ? to include the Reserve components ? and the U.S. Coast Guard ?under one new command.? He also read a letter from Rumsfeld, which stated that Eberhart was leaving behind ?a legacy that will continue to enhance U.S. security for years to come.?

Turning attention to the new NORAD and USNORTHCOM commander, Wolfowitz said there was ?no better person? than Keating to build on Eberhart?s accomplishments.

According to the deputy secretary of defense, both Eberhart and Keating possess the same ?spirit? as the late Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, who ?inspired confidence in others? and, who ?went on to conduct that remarkable and unconventional raid on Tokyo in 1942.?

Wolfowitz said the raid announced to the world that America ?was there in the thick of the fight.? He said the United States is again in the thick of things because of the war on terrorism, ?and general Eberhart and Admiral Keating share the Doolittle spirit.?

?They are both confident, direct men, who mean what they say and say what they mean.?

Wolfowitz said that both men are leaders with ?the courage to take action and see them through.?

After thanking Canada and the United States for the opportunity to serve as commander, Keating directed his comments to NORAD and USNORTHCOM members, saying ?you?ve done much for which you can be proud so it is OK to walk with a bit of a

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swagger.?

However, the new commander also cautioned members that protecting the nation and its territories would require ?constant vigilance and more.? The ?more? included innovation, aggressiveness and ?rock solid readiness to respond at a moment?s notice.?

Keating also told members that the commands? bottom line is ?securing liberty and maintaining the trust as the Canadian and American people expect and deserve.? He concluded his remarks saying that he and his wife, Wandalee, ?are very proud to join this team and we ask God?s continued blessings ? on the United States and Canada.?

During the ceremony, Eberhart received the Defense Distinguished Service Medal (with second oak leaf cluster) and Canada?s Meritorious Service Cross (military division).

The citation accompanying the DDSM said Eberhart?s leadership and professionalism contributed to the security of the United States and Canada following the 2001 terrorists attacks. The Canadian citation lauded Eberhart?s ?strong vision and tenacious pursuit of bi-national support for the common defense of North America,? which ?contributed significantly to the advancement and defense programs critical to Canada.?

Canadian Gen. Ray Henault, chief of the Defence Staff, presided over the NORAD change of command. Several minutes later, Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presided over the USNORTHCOM change of command.

Prior to becoming director of the Joint Staff in October 2003, Keating was commander of Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. Fifth Fleet. Before that he served two years as deputy chief of Naval Operations for Plans, Policy and Operations.

The admiral has also served as commander of the Naval Strike Warfare Center at NAS Fallon, Nev.; commander of Carrier Air Wing Nine, aboard the USS Nimitz (CVN 68); and chief of Naval Operations Fellow with the Strategic Studies Group in Newport, R.I.

Keating served two tours at Naval Military Personnel Command ? first as head of the aviation junior officer assignments branch and later as director of the aviation officer distribution division. He also is an experienced carrier group commander and administration, operations and maintenance officer.

Keating, who completed flight training in August 1973, has more than 5,000 flying hours and 1,200 arrested landings. He earned combat experience during Operation Desert Storm while assigned to the USS Saratoga (CV60). Keating also served aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) and the USS Mason (DD 852).

The admiral?s awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal (with one oak leaf cluster), Distinguished Service Medal (with gold star), Legion of Merit (with three gold stars), Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Medal (with gold star), three Air Medals, and the Navy Commendation Medal (with two gold stars and combat ?V?).

(Editor?s note: For more on Admiral Keating, see his biography at http://www.northcom.mil/index.cfm?fuseaction=s.who_commander§ion=2)